

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. **09/417,705**
Amendment filed November 10, 2005
Reply to OA dated August 11, 2005

REMARKS:

Claims 16-23 are currently being considered, none of which have been amended herein.

Claims 16, 17, and 21-23 stand rejected under USC 103(a) as obvious over USP 6,661,452
(**Nishikawa**) in view of USP 5,835,164 (**Kanai**).

Claims 18-20 stand rejected under USC 103(a) as obvious over **Nishikawa** in view of **Kanai**
and USP 6,295,596 (**Hirabayashi**).

Applicant respectfully traverses the above rejections.

Applicant's priority date October 14, 1998 (that is, foreign priority date October 14, 1998
based on Japanese Patent Application No. 10-291995) is before **Nishikawa**'s U.S. filing date of
February 22, 1999.

In order to perfect Applicant's claim for priority, and thereafter obtain the benefit of
Applicant's earlier priority date of October 14, 1998, please find enclosed a verified English
translation of Japanese Patent Application No. 10-291995.

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In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that **Nishikawa** is not an effective reference against Applicant's claimed invention.

Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that the above rejections should be withdrawn.

In view of the aforementioned remarks, all claims currently being considered are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

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In the event that this paper is not timely filed, the Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

Enclosure: Verified English Translation of Japanese Patent Application No. 10-291995